
MINUTES

The Redevelopment Commission met in special session jointly with a quorum of the Columbus Board of Aviation Commissioners on Thursday, November 19, 2015 at 3:00 p.m. in the Columbus, Indiana Common Council Chambers. The meeting was chaired by Mayor and Redevelopment Commission President Kristen Brown. Other Commission members present were Frank Jerome, David Wright, and Russ Poling, Jr.

Also present were Chris Hamm, Senior Planner and Sean Downey, Project Engineer for HWC Engineering, which firm had been engaged by the Aviation Board to create a development plan funded by the Redevelopment Commission for the City's transformation of the former Walesboro Airport into an industrial park. A few members of the public and media representatives were also present.

Except for matters raised by members of the public present, matters discussed during the meeting were those previously disclosed in a public notice of the meeting.

Call to Order

- 1) Roll Call by Mayor Brown – Russ Poling, Jr., David Wright, Mayor Brown and Frank Jerome.
- 2) Absent: Laurie Booher and Bob Abrams (non-voting member).

The Commission's roll call was followed by a roll call of Board of Aviation Commissioners, chaired by its President Caleb Tennis, and a joint review by Mayor Brown and Mr. Tennis of the need for HWC's detailed development / marketing plan and focused civil engineering work with respect to the property as an anticipated follow-up to a higher-level study of the development possibilities for the Airport that had been conducted by Ratio Architects in 2012.

Mr. Hamm provided the Boards' Commissioners with an update of HWC's activities to-date in this phase, which is to include a fiscal analysis of the cost to develop the lots compared to a projected return on the City's investment. He described that HWC had met with Cummins and Faurecia, the two Columbus companies currently utilizing the former airport runways to test engines and emission control technologies, including detailing that Faurecia had a long-term lease of a portion of the runways, tied to its development of a new manufacturing plant being constructed on approximately 36 acres near its technical center, and that Cummins leases a portion of the runways that is renewed on an annual basis. This discussion was in connection with the idea, suggested in the Ratio study, of having straight line and banked oval test tracks to test automotive products as a tool for recruiting companies to a new industrial park. Mr. Hamm

recommended keeping a test track in the development plans for now. He explained he had also discussed the development with the Columbus Economic Development Board and other community stakeholders, including Bartholomew REMC, that would provide electricity to the development.

He further explained that HWC was estimating that fully developing the property could take 20 or more years and was recommending that its 740 acres be developed in phases, with about 200 acres near its center developed in a first phase, so as to not affect the runways currently being leased by Cummins and Faurecia, or where a speculated new shared test track could be built, and said keeping flexibility in the phases would work to the City's advantage.

HWC had also identified several challenges to developing the property based on the 2012 study and current market conditions, including that a majority of it sits in a flood plain, which federal designation is expected to possibly be lifted in the first quarter of 2016. Mr. Hamm also highlighted that the 2012 study had recommended a rail spur be extended to the property to serve a few lots, but suggested that should be reconsidered by the City if the focus may be on attracting research and development firms rather than becoming a traditional industrial park. He suggested that if rail service was eventually required however, that it could be provided more cost-effectively than proposed in the 2012 study.

Discussions occurred among representatives of both Commissions, Mr. Hamm and Mr. Downey during the course of HWC's presentation, including of HWC's deliverables by the end of 2015, which discussions were then followed by an opportunity for any comments from members of the public present.

Adjournment

Upon motion duly made by Frank Jerome and seconded by David Wright, the meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Approval of November 19, 2015 minutes.

Chairperson

Member



Columbus Redevelopment Commission

Special Joint Meeting
Thursday, November 19, 2015
3:00 PM
City Council Chambers

Member

Member

Member

Date: _____